



M E D I A R E L E A S E

STATE OF TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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JEFFERSON COUNTY CHILD CARE AGENCY SURRENDERS LICENSE *PROVIDER PROHIBITED FROM APPLYING FOR A NEW LICENSE FOR ONE YEAR*

NASHVILLE, Tenn.— The Tennessee Department of Human Services today accepted the surrender of Noah's Ark Nursery and Preschool's license, three weeks and two days after inspectors found an infant alone in a dark bathroom with a pacifier taped to his mouth. Owner and director of Noah's Ark, Kimberly Trentham, will not be allowed to operate a licensed child care facility in Tennessee for at least one year. She had been in business since 1993.

"It was the Department's intention to seek revocation of Ms. Trentham's license," said DHS Child and Adult Licensing Director Lois Barrett-Luke. "Since she has offered to relinquish her license voluntarily, the desired outcome of protecting children who were enrolled in this child care agency is accomplished without the costs to taxpayers that would be incurred as the result of continued legal proceedings."

Revoking an agency's license is the toughest enforcement tool DHS can use against an agency for violating the rules. Whenever a license is revoked, a provider must wait one year before being allowed to reapply.

In late September, DHS received an anonymous complaint that a substitute teacher working in the infant room at Noah's Ark was taping a pacifier to the mouth of a four-month-old child to keep him from crying. When DHS arrived at the center to check out the complaint, the licensing counselor heard muffled whining from the bathroom. When she opened the door, she discovered a baby boy strapped to a "bouncy seat." His mouth was covered with two pieces of two-inch-wide clear packing tape over a pacifier.

Jefferson City Police and the Department of Children's Services were immediately called to investigate, and the agency was served with a suspension order. The agency, which was licensed to care for up to 24 children, has been closed since Wednesday, September 26.

DHS licenses more than 3,400 child care agencies across the state. In addition to periodic investigation of licensees by its own staff, the Department relies on parents, providers and the community to call in complaints about suspected problems. All complaints are investigated. Last year, licensing staff conducted more than 22,000 visits to child care centers and homes. Of these, 19,000 were unannounced visits.

For more information on child care licensing, visit: http://state.tn.us/humanserv/adfam/cc_main.htm . To report suspected licensing violations or possible illegal child care operations, call the Child Care Complaint Hotline at **1-800-462-8261**.

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